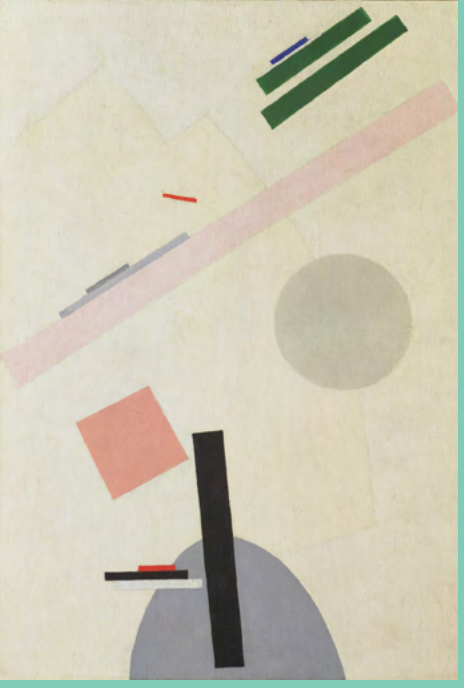

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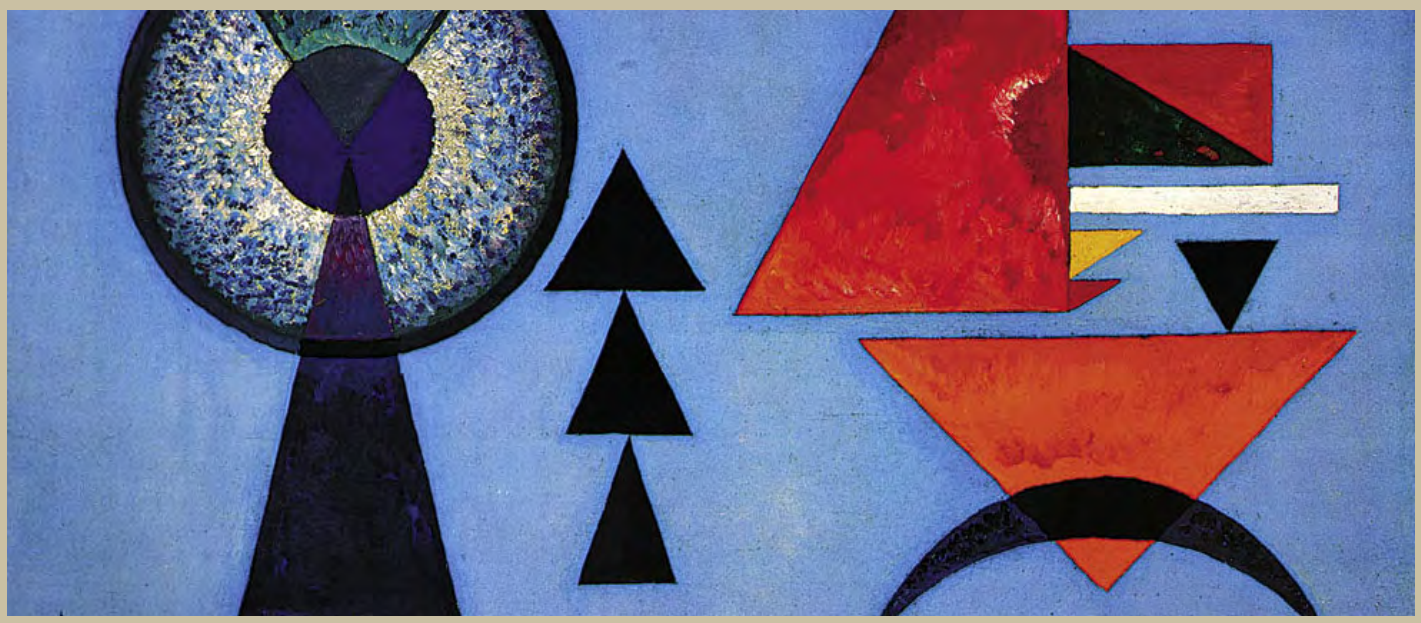

Poems and prose are written by Future Collective

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We publish strictly digitally every two months. Access all our past and current issues at theconstructdocuments.blogspot.com. Contact us at construct.docs@gmail.com

Designed in Jakarta and Singapore

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Suprematist Painting by Kazimir Malevich, 1916-17.

Masthead photo:
Soft Hard by Wassily Kandinsky, 1928.

CONSTRUCT 2018
The views expressed in CONSTRUCT are shared by the publication as a whole.

Fixed

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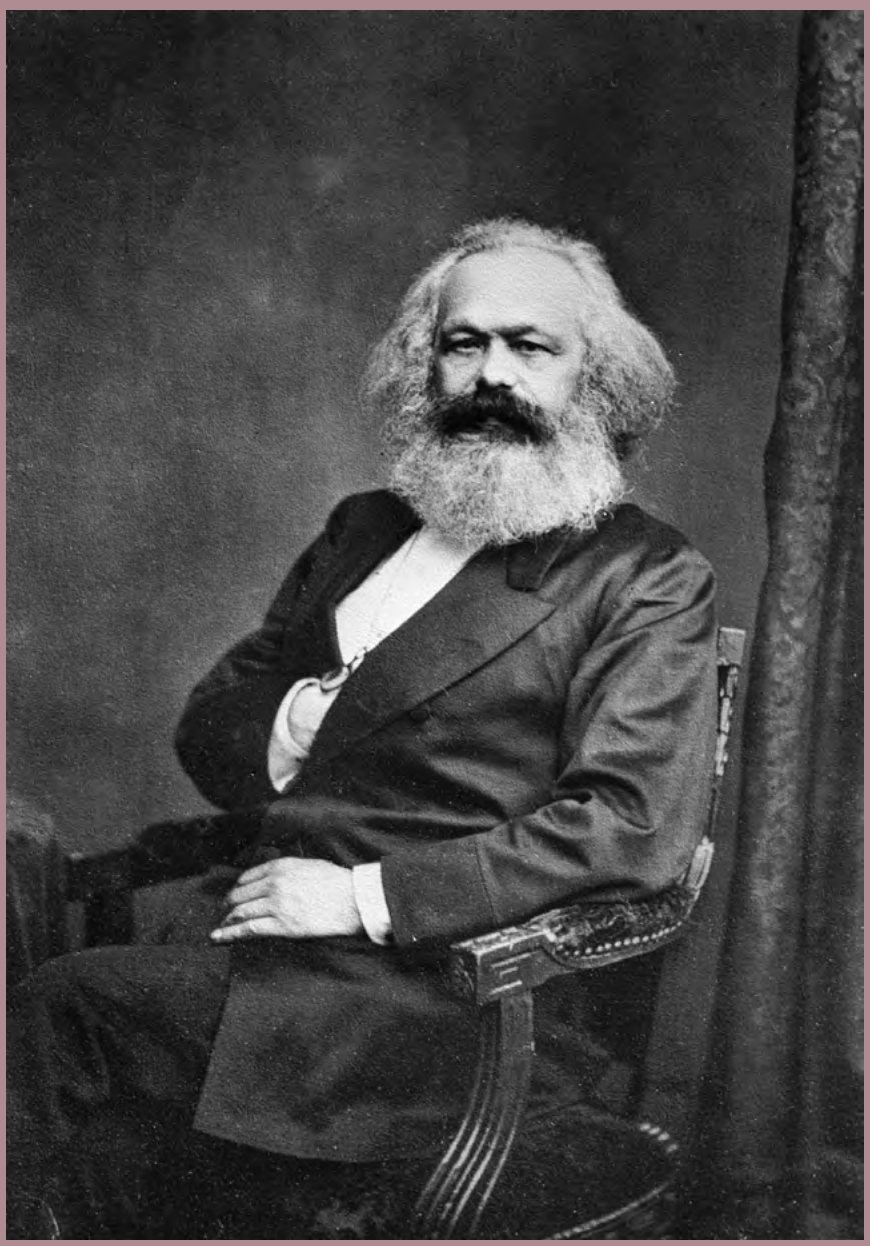

Karl Marx in 1875

“New year, new beginning”

The quote above is, unfortunately, nonsense.

We’re still trapped inside this machine, still comfortable with loads of mind-numbing substances as a living monument, shoved down our five senses from left and right, above and under.

Regrets, fear and doubts of the past become our barricades. It’s not surprising that the future we wanted never came; it was shadowed by lies and deceit.

“History repeats itself,” as Marx says, “first as tragedy, then as farce.”

But, in between space and time to contemplate, there’s our chance to give life another shot, to live to the fullest and seize everything day by day, to grasp every meaning and make it a weapon of the mind.

To give meaning to our existence in this new year and new beginning is to take back the chance to scream at the top of our lungs:

“We have not perished yet!”

...as we go back to our routines.

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TRUC

anger without nuance
so vulnerable to hatred
too vulgar to get the right kind of recognition
don't even dream about making a change

obscenity requires no effort
yelling *fuck you* is as easy as fucking
obscenity relinquishes nuance
what feels good doesn't always do good
^
you

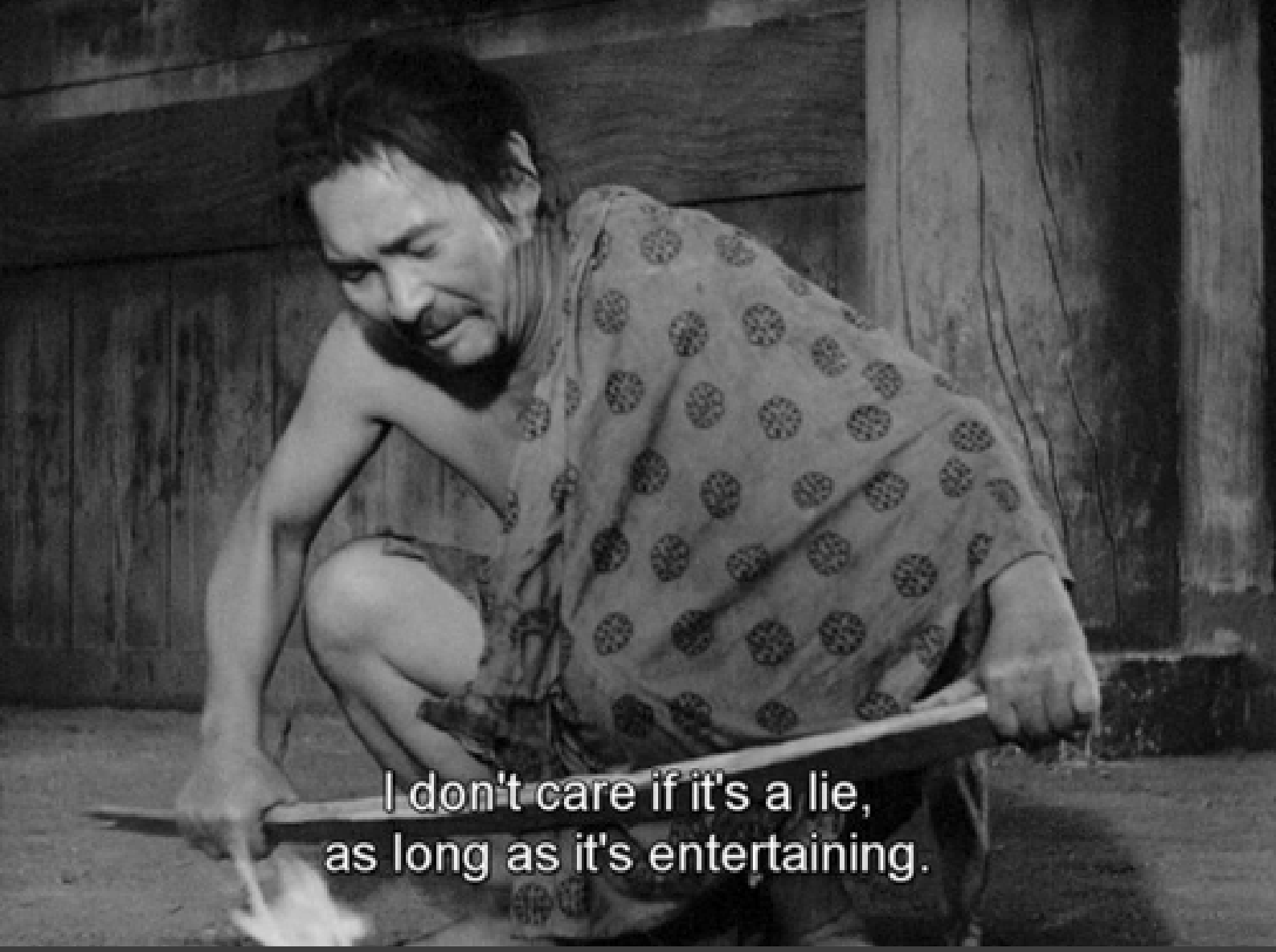
look tough with that foul mouth
life's rough here in the south
of the globe
of course
I get it.
We all do.
Screaming seems like the only way out of this equatorial Inferno:

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

it now occurs to me that everyone screams that way
aaaaa u n i v e r s a l exclamation!!!!!
anguish, despair, fear, frustration, et cetera
your mother tongue can do nothing but taste
the loophole in language

it's always hard to face the facts
which is why you have to stay calm
this time
this time yelling won't do it
typing in caps lock won't do it
writing this poem probably won't either
but words do matter
enough
which is more than
enough

to have a conversation
unpunctuated by inane insults and fragile fists



Still from Rashomon (1950), Dir. Akira Kurosawa

setiap jengkal adalah sebuah persembahan
jemari telah kehilangan tuannya
dan berkoalisi dengan mesin
lalu melempar batu ke jendela tempurung

"*jalan hidupmu masih panjang, bung!*" ucap bayanganku

aneh…
dia bisa mendikte…

kemana perginya, wahai juru selamat?
rupanya Ia lari terbirit-birit
karena peziarahnya berhenti berlangganan
tak ada lagi yang bisa disembah

mungkinkah ada kesempatan untuk memutar balik?
atau hanya akan berakhir dalam kubangan lumpur?

Jawabannya adalah:
"*Dilarang menyesal!!!*"

bahagia bisa dicicil
namun sengsara dibayar kontan

ZIARAH

RE: Initial Design Brief for METAKARTA City

Anansha Wirawan <anansha@karsadesign.com>
To: mukhti@ar-consult.com

Dear Mukhti,

Thanks for this—received the brief and overall details. Let me get back to you with some notes on it.
In the mean time: has there been any news on the documents for the project setups?

Regards,
Anansh

Anansha Wirawan
Partner & Business Development Manager | Karsa Design Indonesia

Forward: RE: Initial Design Brief for METAKARTA City

Anansha Wirawan <anansha@karsadesign.com>
To: syadza@@karsadesign.com

Hi Syadza,

Please take a look at the brief attached—this is from one of the 'Big 5' consultant firms that I told you about.

The project seems to be quite challenging and 'new'—as there would be lots of space where we can put different methods to try on.

Let me know once you have already read through the document.

Regards,
Anansh

Re: Forward: RE: Initial Design Brief for METAK….

Sita Syadza <syadza@karsadesign.com>
To: anansh@@karsadesign.com

Hi Anansh,

I've read through the brief… and I'm quite amused by the requirements and direction it seems to be taking.

There seems to be a subtle emphasis that the client wants to portray some progressive, democratic, liberal values on the one hand—while on the other, an inability to compensate the (inherent) risk of those values.

As far as translating the results and KPIs from the research wouldn't be a problem with our Design team doing it in-house—while also adding some speculative and strategic scenario making from your end.

However, I think we would need to dial up some Data Ethnographers and Sociometric experts as part of our proposal. Do you happen to still have the contacts for such resources?

Let me know about this — hope we can get the project commissioned!

Regards,

Sita Syadza
Interaction Design Head | Karsa Design Indonesia

A+R CONSULTING PROJECT BRIEF
STRATEGIC DESIGN RESEARCH

Metakarta:

Platform-As-Program For User-Citizen Political Participation

Background

METAKARTA is a Real Estate, hyper-urban development project by PT Xenograha Satya Kencana that was officially launched in September 2019. The hyper-urban complex has an increasing number of housing residents (up to 1-million as of November 2021) and corporate/business tenants (approx. 120 offices registered, as of November 2021) and is currently in its third phase of expansion program.

A subsidiary of the mega-conglomerate Xeno Corporation, PT Xenograha Satya Kencana is owned and founded by Radhie Xenodipoetro, the son of the current ruling Vice-President Soexeno.

As a techno-preneur, CEO, and innovator, Radhie Xenodipoetro brings his leadership and expertise into the Real Estate industry and continues to bring disruptive and game-changing innovations through his company's pioneer urban project: *METAKARTA*.

A+R Consulting is trusted by PT Xenograha Satya Kencana as their strategic partner for the development of those innovations through various projects.

With that objective in mind, A+R creates this Design/Research brief to Karsa Design in order to conduct a Strategic Design analysis that would help A+R in planning, executing, and assessing one of the future programs on behalf of PT Xenograha Satya Kencana.

Project Context

METAKARTA positions itself as the first private urban complex that truly integrates technological innovations into every part of its components. 'The Platform-City for Citizen 2.0'—where Businesses and User/Consumer/Citizens gather in making "*the future, today.*"

Driven by its techno-utopian vision, METAKARTA claims to be the pioneering 'private city-state' model where transparent democracy—and democratic transparency—can happen due to its advanced integrated technological system. It also claimed that it "attracts progressive and visionary minds who are seeking a civil and nurturing environment" that the country had perceived to be lacking.

As part of that vision, METAKARTA plans to launch and provide the means that would facilitate its User-citizens' in expressing political aspirations, opinions, and activism.

However, the city would also need assurance and standardization—to identify hidden risks, monitor, and benchmark political progress and results. Thus, minimizing mismatches with the foundational vision and programs of the city.

Outcome

• To build a 'Platform-as-Program' for the user-citizen's political conduct, to which:

  • *The software-platform and the offline experience of political participation would merge and be inseparable*

  • *Would facilitate and manage the monitoring, detection, education, and forecasting of the political process from start to finish*

  • *Iteration and optimization of the sociopolitical progress while keeping it in alignment with the core values of METAKARTA*

Project Objective

•A full-fledged detailed report and initial Design Plan prototype

•Key Performance Indicator for each of the 'Research Objective' points

Design-Research Objective

With the project objectives mentioned above, the research should answer:

• Segmentation and psychogeographical mapping of the political, ideological varieties and belief systems among the User-citizens

• User-citizens Behavioral Mapping that would include various touch-points, including but not limited to:
  • Communication and knowledge channels;
  • Architectural or Spatial channels;

• Parameters for *Bio-political & Hegemonic Equity* and *Virilium* metrics

• Quantified benchmarks for measuring and forecasting the changes and deviance of the User-citizen

• Means of incorporating data gathering functionalities into the different touch-points of the city's interface

Ada lelaki berseragam di toilet / Di depan cermin ia menunduk
mengalih pandangan membalut marmer—*tangan menjadi marmer*
terpejam diam oleh tanda titik / yang diinterupsi oleh
jera, jera, jera dalam pengalaman nyata / Berapa bajingan
dibutuhkan untuk menarik limusin? Barangkali satu
—atau sejuta tali urat nadi bajingan / para pelindung sepi
"Kebersihan lantai tak semenarik bayangan bulan di atas air jamban
biarlah keluguan kain pel itu terjaga" pikirku
tapi: noda – noda – noda
hanya itu ketakutan yang dikenalnya / dari sembilan sampai lima
Aku bisa berbuat apa?

Bayangkan bila aku seorang
MAYAKOVSKY—RAKSASA JAHANAM
YANG BERTARUNG DENGAN ZAMAN
maka lelaki itu tak perlu sendiri / tak perlu lagi dihajar dinding
sana-sini / hilang, sirna & mati:
Apa saja yang berat sebelah
akan selalu bertemu musuh
Biar kata-kata & puisiku menjadi ujian baginya / sebuah pengingat
bagi malapropisme; bagi miskomunikasi Quixotic (fosil & dosil)
dalam jagat suara generasi (kita nyatanya masih berdiri)
& biar pula sekaligus kutekankan:
kita yang mengundang kesepian
kita yang mengundang keraguan
kita pula yang tak mengenali kesendirian

SEBUAH KIASAN

ON REVOLUTIONARY HONESTY

I

"Honesty," sang Billy Joel, "Is such a lonely word, everyone is so untrue. Honesty is hardly ever heard, and mostly what I need from you."

Never has the veracity of a chorus to a ho-hum radio tune proved truer and more consequential than it is today, where we exist brutally pacified under structural curricula of epistemic violence, situated within the consolidation of Castells' "black holes of human misery." Under these present conditions, the predominant social and political disposition is both *deceit* and *hypocrisy*—not just as private moral values, but also pulsating within the coercive structures of ostensible social order—emblazoned in risqué, technicolored neon. Honesty, therefore, is the lone torch lighting up the Via Dolorosa of everyday resistance, the kernel of solidarity against which all labors and pretentions must be unflinchingly measured by.

I am referring to honesty in a desperately political sense: a *revolutionary* honesty—a bloodstained, defiant blade in the Great War of our age against the murderous and mind-flaying capitalist logic of accumulation and expansion.

II

Revolutionary honesty, in both the *individual* and *collective* senses, comprises:

a) The moral fiber necessary to reject or minimize, to the best of one's abilities, complicity in furthering social-ecological crises;

b) Sensitivity towards the oscillations of fundamental hypocrisies reflected in the self, others, and in the products of the interplays of dominant (i.e. including, but not limited to, state and market) power relations;

c) The intent and courage to forthrightly challenge said base hypocrisies wherever they occur;

d) The predisposition to apply the science of materialist dissection to unveil and strip the material realities or truths of quotidian exploitation, alienation, and suffering—to quote James Ferguson, the "fiendishly complex, multiply-layered and decidedly trans-national apparatus of harm-production"—from their ubiquitous façades of hegemonic subterfuge;

e) Rejection of self-isolation.

III

To *be honest* is often used interchangeably with *telling the truth*, especially when directly and contextually demanding one's own approximation of that ideal from another entity ("Be *honest*. Come on, tell me the *truth*!"). Therefore, practicing revolutionary honesty also comprises "telling the truth" in a revolutionary sense. The intersection between *honesty* and *truth*, as well as the politically contextual values behind them, should not be ineffectually interpreted as mere truism or a mundane exercise in axiology. Rather, it should be read as a political criterion impregnated with clues for discovering the centroid or geometric center, if you will, of the plane of emancipatory praxis.

IV

What truth(s) are we referring to? Certainly not the epistemic cul-de-sacs of monolithic dogmatism, but rather that which is materially conditioned by the dialectic relations between man and the earth that he lives and oppresses on; in particular, of the interpretation of his social-ecological lifeworld, the deciphering of his historical suffering, and the rumination of his social betterment. Unlike the self-proclaimed Truths of dogmatism, this *liberating* truth is *never a given* yet necessitates industrious investigation ("there is no royal road to science"). To practice revolutionary truth-telling is thus to perpetually inquire after truth.

The truth(s) articulated through revolutionary honesty is not necessarily restricted to the immediacy of private experience. Even if we have never *personally* experienced the grotesque horrors associated with garment factory labor, for example, it does not undermine our capacity to declare the *truths* of systematic exploitation—whatever its semblance may be—as self-evident. On the other hand, the capacity to self-articulate the material conditions of one's lifeworld, with all its grievances, is the heart of dignified and politically subjectivated production of collective meaning—we are talking in the context of the dire contestation over legitimacy—and the unquenchable fire what keeps the frosty tempests of axiological fascism at bay. (I imagine the following dialogue spoken by the Geist of Modernism to its heathen dissidents: "You do not possess the mental faculties required to *comprehend* let alone *explain* your own predicament, due to either a lack of formal education or a treasonous indifference to national priorities. The engineers and planners know what is best for you, and your idiosyncratically backward ontologies and corpora of social memory are meaningless and obstructive to modern development.").

After all, doesn't the Linguistic Question of our age revolve around the fact that our *words* have been appropriated with surgical precision by the structural juggernaut of capitalist hegemony? We might as well be utterly mute, for we have been mercilessly dispossessed of meaningful ways to convey the multifaceted subjectivities of trauma. To practice revolutionary honesty is thus to expand the frontiers of *language* and its relation to the materiality of contemporary suffering; to brave ourselves to explore new pathways of discursive practice—new *animated vocabularies*—necessary for meaningful *interpretation* and *change*.

V

To be honest or to tell the truth in the spirit of revolutionary practice is to liberate it from the fatal discontents of liberal ideology. Honesty in the revolutionary sense ceases to become a mere private beguilement of bourgeois relations (e.g. a farcical filler in a job application letter: "I am an *honest*, hard-working individual"—do you see the absurdity of self-proclaiming to be "honest," while applying for a job under capitalist labor relations that sweeps exploitation under the rug?). Instead, it realizes its self-worth as the main portcullis of a movement's stronghold: the impassable barrier where the enemy will batter yet inevitably founder upon, as well as the central gateway for us to sally forth from to the circadian rhythms of battle. To be honest or to tell the truth in the spirit of revolutionary practice is to wield it against the demons of societal neurosis.

VI

Revolutionary honesty in a mode of production—that is, the *self-actualizing* and *socially-enriching* objectification of labor, as opposed to the *alienating* objectification of the capitalist mode of production—is required to liberate production from the structurally exploitative and alienating banality that chews on every synapse of our daily nervous system. Marx succinctly elucidates this:

> Suppose we had produced things as human beings: in his production each of us would have *twice affirmed* himself and the other. (1) In my *production* I would have objectified my *individuality* and its *particularity*, and in the course of the activity I would have enjoyed an individual *life*; in viewing the object I would have experienced the individual joy of knowing my personality as an *objective*, *sensuously perceptible*, and *indubitable* power. (2) In your satisfaction and your use of my product I would have had the *direct* and conscious satisfaction that my work satisfied a *human* need, that it objectified *human* nature, and that it created an object appropriate to the need of another *human* being. (3) I would have been the *mediator* between you and the species and you would have experienced me as a redintegration of your own nature and a necessary part of your self; I would have been affirmed in your thought as well as your love. (4) In my individual life I would have directly created your life; in my individual activity I would have immediately *confirmed* and *realized* my true *human* and *social* nature.
>
> Young Marx, p. 281

This is the paradise lost that we are obligated to redeem humanity towards.

VII

It is not enough to pursue the path of resistance yet play it safe and be complacent in political acts of cowardice, such as that branch of pseudoactivism strictly limited to ethical consumption. Even worse is the type that is adulterously in bed with the duplicity of cultural capitalism. This is, in fact, the very opposite of revolutionary honesty.

Conversely, if socially practiced and demonstrated through conscientious example, revolutionary honesty will result in the imbuing of our collective existence with the two cardinal verbs of emancipatory praxis: *to resist* and *to heal*.

VIII

At the entrance to meaningful resistance, as at the entrance to hell,
the demand for revolutionary honesty must be made:

Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto
Ogni vilta convien che qui sia morta.

[From Dante, Divina Commedia:
Here must all distrust be left;
All cowardice must here be dead.]